NEUTRALITY - CANADIAN FRONTIER

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25th Congress, 2d Session. [Doc. No. 64.] Ho of Reps. Executive.

NEUTRALITY—CANADIAN FRONTIER.

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

TRANSMITTING

A letter from the Marshal of the Northern District of the State of New York, respecting Disturbances on the Canadian Frontier.

January 5, 1838.
Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Washington, *January* 5, 1838.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

Recent experience on the Southern boundary of the United States, and the events now daily occurring on our Northern frontier, have abundantly shown that the existing laws are insufficient to guard against hostile invasion, from the United States, of the territory of friendly and neighboring nations.

The laws in force provide sufficient penalties for the punishment of such offences, after they have been committed, and provided the parties can be found; but the Executive is powerless in many cases to prevent the commission of them, even when in possession of ample evidence of an intention, on the part of evil-disposed persons, to violate our laws.

Your attention is called to this defect in our legislation. It is apparent that the Executive ought to be clothed with adequate power effectually to restrain all persons within our jurisdiction from the commission of acts of this character. They tend to disturb the peace of the country, and inevitably involve the Government in perplexing controversies with foreign Powers. I recommend a careful revision of all the laws now in force, and such additional enactments as may be necessary to vest in the Executive full power to prevent injuries being inflicted upon neighboring nations, by the unauthorized and unlawful acts of citizens of the United States, or of other persons who may be within our jurisdiction, and subject to our control.

In illustration of these views, and to show the necessity of early action on the part of Congress, I submit, herewith, a copy of a letter received from the marshal of the northern district of New York, who had been directed to repair to the frontier, and take all authorized measures to secure the faithful execution of existing laws.

M. VAN BUREN.

BUFFALO, *December* 28, 1837.

To his Excellency M. VAN BUREN:

SIR: This frontier is in a state of commotion. I came to this city on the 22d instant, by direction of the United States attorney for the northern district of this State, for the purpose of serving process upon individuals suspected of violating the laws of the United States, enacted with a view to maintain our neutrality. I learned, on my arrival, that some 200 or 300 men, mostly from the district of country adjoining this frontier, and from this side of the Niagara, had congregated upon Navy island, (Upper Canada,) and were then in arms, with Rensselaer Van Rensselaer, of Albany, at their head as commander-in-chief. From that time to the present they have received constant accessions of men, munitions of war, provisions, &c., from persons residing within the States.

Their whole force is now about 1,000 strong, and, as is said, are well supplied with arms, &c.

Warrants have been issued in some cases, but no arrests have as yet been effected. This expedition was got up in this city, soon after McKenzie's arrival upon this side of the river, and the first company that landed upon the island were organized, partially at least, before they crossed from this side to the island.

From all that I can see and learn, I am satisfied that, if the Government deem it their duty to prevent supplies being furnished from this side to the army on the island, and also the augmentation of their forces from among the citizens of the States, an armed force, stationed along upon the line of the Niagara will be absolutely necessary to its accomplishment.

I have just received a communication from Colonel McNabb, commanding her Majesty's forces now at Chippewa, in which he strongly urged the public authorities here to prevent supplies being furnished to the army on the island, at the same time stating that, if this can be effected, the whole affair could be closed without any effusion of blood.

McNabb is about 2,500 strong, and constantly increasing. I replied to him that I should communicate with you immediately, as also with the Governor of this State, and that every thing which could would be done to maintain a strict neutrality.

I learn that persons here are engaged in dislodging one or more steamboats from the ice, and, as is supposed, with a view to aid in the patriot expedition.

I am, sir, with great consideration,

Your obedient servant,

N. GARROW,

U. S. Marshal, Northern Dist., N. York.

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